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**11,157 PLANT MARIJUANA GROW AND POSSESSION
OF AK-47 RESULT IN INDICTMENT**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury here has charged Valentin Gisar Mora, 24, of Telcatepe, Michoacan, with violations involving marijuana cultivation and firearms use.

The grand jury returned an indictment charging Mora with conspiring to manufacture marijuana, manufacturing marijuana, and carrying an AK-47 semiautomatic assault rifle during the commission of the drug trafficking crimes.

According to court documents, federal, state, and local agents entered an 11,157 plant marijuana garden near Feather Falls in Butte County on the morning of September 19, 2003. As they walked into the garden, the agents observed three men, to whom they identified themselves as police officers. One of these men, later identified as Martin Cardenas Baez, was carrying an AK-47 assault rifle, which he raised into a firing position. Fearing for their lives, the agents opened fire, killing Baez, as well as his colleague, Jose Guadalupe Casillas Castaneda. Castaneda had been armed with a .38 caliber revolver.

Mora was also carrying an AK-47, but agents were able to disarm him and arrest him. Mora was interviewed, and indicated that Castaneda had recruited him to tend to the marijuana garden. Mora further indicated that after 60 plants had been stolen from the garden, Baez obtained the two AK-47s and the revolver which the three men then kept to arm themselves.

Mora faces a maximum sentence of life in prison, and a fine of up to \$4 million. He faces a minimum sentence of twenty years in prison, ten years for the marijuana charges, plus ten years for the firearm charge.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case was investigated by the Butte County Sheriff's Department, the California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement, and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

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